

Message Text

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11
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-06 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-07 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 SP-02 STR-04

TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 DLOS-06 INT-05

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE REYKJAVIK 1581

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TAGS: EFIS, IC, EEC
SUBJECT: ICELAND-EEC FISHERIES TALKS

REF: REYKJAVIK 1558

1. SUMMARY: AS OSLO AGREEMENT BETWEEN ICELAND AND UK EXPIRES, ALL BRITISH TRAWLERS ARE EXPECTED TO DEPART ICELANDIC WATERS BY 2400 HR DECEMBER 1 DEADLINE. ANY TRAWLERS REMAINING BEHIND TO CONTINUE FISHING DO SO AT THEIR OWN RISK. NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ICELAND AND EEC WILL BEGIN ON DECEMBER 16 AT EITHER REYKJAVIK OR BRUSSELS; HOWEVER NO FINAL AGREEMENT IS EXPECTED AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER JANUARY 1. PRIMARY EMPHASIS OF ANY AGREEMENT WILL PROBABLY BE ON CONSERVATION OF FISH STOCKS RATHER THAN ON RECIPROCAL FISHING RIGHTS. ANY BRITISH ACCESS TO ICELANDIC WATERS IN FOREEABLE FUTURE WOULD ONLY BE TOKEN PRESENCE.

2. BRITISH TRAWLERS ARE EXPECTED TO BE OUT OF ICELANDIC
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WATERS AT MIDNIGHT DECEMBER 1 WHEN OSLO AGREEMENT EXPIRES.

ONLY REDUCED NUMBER (ABOUT 14) WERE THOUGHT TO BE STILL PRESENT ON NOVEMBER 30 AND THESE APPEAR TO BE PREPARING TO CEASE FISHING ACTIVITIES AND DEPART. ANY BRITISH TRAWLERS REMAINING BEHIND TO CONTINUE FISHING WILL DO SO AT OWN RISK AND REPORTEDLY WILL NOT RECEIVE ANY BRITISH GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OR ASSISTANCE IN EVENT OF CONFRONTATION WITH ICELANDIC COAST GUARD. FUTURE ACCESS, IF ANY, BY BRITISH TRAWLERS TO FISHING GROUNDS OFF ICELAND WILL BE SUBJECT TO TERMS OF EVENTUAL EEC-ICELANDIC FISHERIES AGREEMENT.

3. INITIAL GOI-EEC NEGOTIATION SESSION SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE ON DECEMBER 16-17 AT EITHER REYKJAVIK OR BRUSSELS. (EARLIER MEETINGS BETWEEN EEC COMMISSIONER GUNDELACH AND GOI ON NOVEMBER 12 AND NOVEMBER 25-26 WERE CHARACTERIZED AS "EXPLORATORY TALKS", NOT "NEGOTIATIONS".) ACCORDING TO LOCAL SOURCES, SEVERAL NEGOTIATION SESSIONS MAY BE NECESSARY AND THUS A FORMAL AGREEMENT BEFORE JANUARY 1 DOES NOT APPEAR LIKELY. ICELANDIC OFFICIALS STATE THAT THE MAJOR THRUST OF ANY FINAL AGREEMENT MUST BE DIRECTED TOWARD COOPERATION BY THE TWO PARTIES ON CONSERVATION OF FISH STOCKS RATHER THAN EXCHANGE OF RECIPROCAL FISHING RIGHTS. (ICELAND APPEARS TO PLACE CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE ON OBTAINING UNDERSTANDING WITH EEC ON CONSERVATION MEASURES COVERING GREENLAND SPAWNING AREAS.)

4. ICELANDIC MFA OFFICIAL, HOWEVER MADE CLEAR TO EMBOFF THAT AS PRICE FOR COMPLIANCE WITH ICELANDIC REQUEST FOR COOPERATION IN CONSERVATION OF FISH STOCKS, EEC EXPECTED QUID PRO QUO IN FORM OF SOME ICELANDIC FISHING CONCESSIONS TO EEC MEMBERS (READ UK). OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH VARIOUS ICELANDIC OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS OF DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY HERE REFLECT CONSENSUS THAT NAY CONCESSIONS ICELAND MIGHT GRANT TO EEC WOULD BE ON SHARPLY REDUCED BASIS AND EVEN THIS WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR ICELANDIC NEGOTIATORS TO CONCEDE SINCE GOI IS UNDER STRONG AND CONTINUING DOMESTIC PRESSURE TO CLOSE ICELANDIC WATERS TO ALL FOREIGN FISHING OPERATIONS.

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5. ICELANDIC PUBLIC OPINION APPEARS TO BE OPPOSED TO ANY SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS TO FOREIGN FISHING INTERESTS, AND THIS OPPOSITION HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED BY SOME RECENT REVELATIONS. ACCORDING TO CURRENT ESTIMATES BRITISH COD CATCH IN ICELANDIC WATERS IN SIX MONTHS PERIOD OSLO AGREEMENT WAS IN EFFECT WAS 25,000 TONS WHILE TOTAL BRITISH COD CATCH HERE FOR ALL OF 1976 WAS ABOUT 60,000 TONS. WEST GERMANS, UNDER TERMS OF EXISTING

AGREEMENT WHICH EXPIRES IN NOVEMBER 1977, PROBABLY TOOK TOTAL OF 5,000 TONS OF COD IN 1976. REPORT ISSUED SEVERAL WEEKS AGO BY ICELANDIC MARINE BIOLOGISTS RECOMMENDED THAT ANNUAL COD CATCH FOR NEXT TWO YEARS BE LIMITED TO 275,000 TONS IN ORDER TO REBUILD DEPLETED FISH STOCKS. HOWEVER, TOTAL 1976 COD CATCH IN ICELANDIC WATERS IS PROJECTED AT 340,000 TONS, EXACTLY 65,000 TONS ABOVE THE LEVEL THE INSTITUTE RECOMMENDED FOR NEXT YEAR. REPORT'S FINDING WERE HIGHLIGHTED BY ICELANDIC PRESS ALONG WITH INEVITABLE SUGGESTIONS THAT IF THE FOREIGN FISHING FLEETS ARE KEPT OUT ICELANDIC FISHERMEN WOULD NEED NOT REDUCE THEIR ANNUAL TAKE.

6. COMMENT: GIVEN THE FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE OF FISHING TO ICELAND'S PRESENT AND FUTURE WELL BEING, DISCUSSIONS OF FISHING RIGHTS QUICKLY DEGENERATE INTO HIGHLY CHARGED EMOTIONAL ENCOUNTERS. ICELANDERS OF ALL POLITICAL LEANINGS ARE UNITED IN THEIR OPPOSITION TO SHARING FISHING RESOURCES WITH ANYONE ELSE, AND HAVING WON THREE SUCCESSIVE COD WARS THEY APPEAR INCREASINGLY UNLIKELY TO GRANT ANY MAJOR CONCESSIONS AT THE BARGAINING TABLE. CONSEQUENTLY, ICELANDIC NEGOTIATORS WILL HAVE VERY LITTLE ROOM FOR MANEUVERING WHEN THEY MEET WITH THEIR EEC COUNTERPARTS LATER THIS MONTH.
BLAKE

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